

Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

December 2009 – January 2010



In God's wildness lies the hope of the world – the great fresh, unblighted, unredeemed wilderness

-John Muir



Beautiful scenes such as these have been frequent occurrences during this "winter to remember".





December – **Larry Wheat** kicked the month off re-flagging the planned multi-use trails in the Dry Creek area...**Wanda Brown** continued to put time in doing administrative work on the volunteer database keeping it all up-to-date...**Blue Goodson, Bill Hodge, Jim Holland, Jeff Hunter, Ken Jones, Ed Ley, Bobby Mitchell, and Tazz Reid** of **Southern Appalachian Backcountry Horsemen**

(SABCH) gathered up one day to tackle the blowdown removal on Rice Camp Trail...over the course of two days **Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, and Amos Burrell** put their crosscutting skills to work on the massive blowdown area on Rice Camp...**Wayne Pattillo, Chuck Brock, Jim**



Wayne Pattillo and Jim Bishop work to remove a blowdown from the Rice Camp Trail

Leatherwood, and David Tanner also contributed a day working on Rice Camp removing blowdowns from the trail...**Bill Hester and Chris Hohol** put their time and energy into trail work on the Pinhoti Trail...**Troy and Wanda Brown** went back the following weekend to hammer away at the blowdowns on Rice Camp...much needed work to clear debris from the Pinhoti Trail for the Snake Creek Gap bike race was accomplished by **Gennie Dasinger, Rick Moon, and Gay Rice**...the Hemp Top Trail needed some attention to remove blowdowns performed

by **Jim Holland and Linda**

Pringle ...crosscutting aficionados **Troy and Wanda Brown** couldn't help

themselves and returned to Rice Camp Trail for more blowdown removal...**Rick Moon and Gay Rice** went back to the Pinhoti to clear more sections of the trail for the upcoming bike race...the foursome of **Jim Bishop, Wayne Pattillo, and Troy and Wanda Brown**, as if they couldn't get enough, finally put the finishing touches crosscutting out the numerous blowdowns on Rice Camp Trail...**Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** put some time in surveying the maintenance needs of Jacks River Trail...and finally, **Sherry Neidich, Holly Nicholson, and Linda Norton** performed several hours of much needed blowdown removal on Sumac Creek Trail. All totaled, volunteers amassed **345 hours** to end the year 2009. Absolutely superb!!!



Team Conasauga volunteers construct a much needed reroute of the Rice Camp Trail

A special shout out to those volunteers who undertook the unenviable task of going to Rice Camp Trail and taking on the massive amount of blowdowns that the District hasn't seen in a long time. Thanks to you all, you helped us accomplish this in an abbreviated amount of time that otherwise would have taken months.



January – **Wanda Brown** kept up the unending task of administrating the volunteer and trail maintenance database...both **Richard and Linda Norton** continued the work on the Sumac Creek Trail clearing out blowdowns for horseback riders...the ten volunteers who put in the back-breaking work for the January volunteer workday rerouting a steep and eroded section of the Rice Camp Trail included **Jim Bishop, Chuck Brock, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, David Daughtrie, Jeff Krivo, Jim Leatherwood, Jody Officer and Tom Owens**...always enjoying a stroll to Beech Bottom and Jacks River Falls was **Mark Voykovic** in his patrolling duties talking to visitors about wilderness regulations...**Troy and Wanda Brown** were back at it again, this time crosscutting blowdowns on the Hickory Ridge Trail...**Jim Holland** closed out the month attending several days worth of a C-certifier crosscutting class allowing him to now teach others in the art of using a crosscut saw. Even though this was a very cold and damp month, volunteers still racked up **177 hours**. Your efforts do not go unnoticed!!! Thanks TEAM!!!

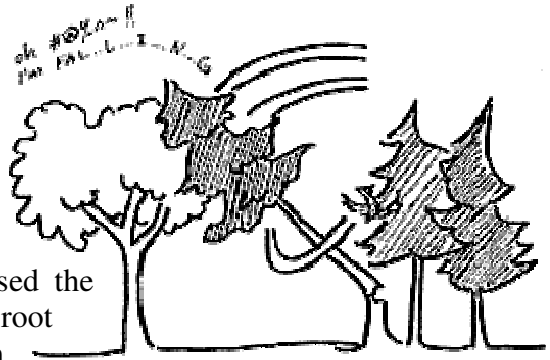


These trail workers are rightfully proud of their efforts on the Rice Camp Trail rerouting project. Volunteers include Tom Owens, Jody Officer, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Chuck Brock, Amos Burrell, Jim Bishop, Jim Leatherwood, Jeff Krivo, and David Daughtrie (not pictured)





You know, how often do we think about snags and other tree hazards while we're out and about enjoying ourselves in the forest whether it be camping, hiking, or hunting?



Probably not much. During the past year we've seen an unprecedented amount of precipitation which has caused the soils to become very saturated thus loosening up the root system of trees. All the while, with the number of storm systems that have come through the area bringing with it high winds only exacerbates the hazards. On the district, we've already seen a great number of trees, both green and snags, come falling down across our road system because of the very reasons above. So, here are some tips to help keep you safe while you're out and about recreating amongst the trees.

- Be alert during wind events for falling snags. If you are in an area of dead trees such as pine beetle killed trees it might be time to leave the area.
- Are you camping? Look carefully for snags and widow makers and keep your campsite distance well away from them.
- Falling trees can have a domino affect on other trees. They can also cause tops to break out and limbs of all sizes to come down as well.
- Taking a trailside break? Be aware of your surroundings. In other words, don't sit under a snag.

SAFETY BEGINS WITH YOU!

What's In Your Wallet?

In addition to your driver's license and other important cards, keep an index card with these vital pieces of information on it.

- ✓ Your phone number and the name and phone number of your physician
- ✓ Current medications, doses, and any allergies
- ✓ Important medical information such as diabetes, asthma, or high cholesterol
- ✓ Any previous surgeries or hospitalizations

Many people are unable to remember even their phone number when they are in pain or stressed. This information will help doctors give you the best care in an emergency situation

(Source: Stanford School of Medicine, Department of Surgery)



LEAVE NO TRACE



You will recall Leave No Trace's seven principles for reducing the damage caused by outdoor activities. They are...

- ❖ **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**
- ❖ **TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**
- ❖ **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**
- ❖ **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**
- ❖ **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**
- ❖ **RESPECT WILDLIFE**
- ❖ **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS**

We discussed the first principle, in our last issue. Now, let's take a look at **Principle #2:**

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Recognize durable surfaces. They include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas. Camp at least 200 feet from lakes and streams where possible.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary. Naturalize your campsite before you leave.
- Concentrate use in popular areas.
 - Stay on designated trails. Walk or ride single file in the middle of the trail, even when it's wet or muddy. Don't shortcut trails that can cause erosion, particularly on switchbacks. Avoid "social trails" often found between campsites.
 - Use well established campsites. Look for sites where the ground cover is already worn away. Choose an established campsite that's big enough for your group. Concentrate your activities within the campsite to avoid enlarging it.
- Disperse use in pristine off-trail areas. Keep groups small. In the Cohutta Wilderness, cross country travel is limited to 4 hikers or less per group and 3 horses or less per group.
 - Avoid creating trails. Spread out when hiking, each person taking a slightly different route. Avoid fragile vegetation and soft soils.
 - Avoid creating campsites. Select the most durable camping location possible. Choose a site that has not been camped in, allowing pre-existing camping sites to heal. Avoid impacts by staying only one night. Vary your route to water and the "bathroom". Before departing, naturalize and disguise the site by replacing any rocks, sticks, or pine cones you moved, spread leaves or needles on any exposed soil, and fluff up matted leaves.

For more Leave No Trace information visit: www.lnt.org



Conasauga Lore

Andrew Jackson Cloer Home Place...Located in the Sumac Creek drainage, on a feeder stream of Sumac Creek, just west of Paint Bank Gap is found the Cloer Home Place. A.J. Cloer was deeded the property in 1891. He deeded the property to his son, A.J. Cloer, Jr. in 1897. A.J. Cloer, Jr. was the father of longtime Forest Service employee Jack Cloer, who was raised at this site. The site was sold to the Forest Service in 1937. There is an unusually large cedar tree located at the house site. It was reported that he had a substantial farm with facilities. Andrew Cloer was an accomplished carpenter. Across the branch from the house is a noteworthy spring. The water trickles down a hollowed wooden trough, which had been placed back into the hillside. Although the trough has been broken in recent years, part of it is still visible. When asked about the age of that spring system, Jack Cloer reported that the trough looked "very old" when he first remembered it as a child

A second home site is located just down the branch from the Andrew Cloer place, and is evidenced by a substantial chimney pile and an old root cellar hole.

Cloer Mill Site...Andrew Cloer operated a watermill on the headwaters of the main prong of Sumac Creek located across the ridge from his home site. It was reported that he had an overshot waterwheel approximately 20 feet high that powered his mill. The old axle flywheel is still lying at the site, along with metal debris. There is also a rock wall located at the site. It was reported that Andrew Cloer built the overshot wheel almost single handedly.

* Historical information provided by Shepherd L. Howell

Conasauga Bits and Pieces

- **New Pinhoti Trail Improvements.** About 8 miles south of Summerville, GA on Highway 100 is located the Highpoint Trailhead, where the Pinhoti Trail begins (south to north) on national forest land managed by the Conasauga Ranger District. Across the highway from the Highpoint Trailhead, a land conservancy organization has purchased about 240 acres, and work has begun to relocate the Pinhoti Trail onto an old railroad bed to avoid the current road walk. So far, Chattooga County road crews and inmate labor from Hays State Prison have been involved in cutting the brush out of the rail bed. Once completed, this 1-mile section of new trail will tie into the Sims Mountain Trail.

- **Another Dubious Distinction for the Cohutta Wilderness.** A January article that appeared on the Forbes Magazine website (Forbes.com), titled Great American Wilderness Spots, identified several of our country's most well known wilderness areas. The Cohutta Wilderness is named as it "offers some of the best trout fishing to be found in the far south
- **National Trails Symposium. Chattanooga, TN, November 14-17, 2010.** Are you interested in networking with the national trails community in an event hosted by the American Trails non-profit organization? Dozens of speakers from across the nation will be presenting. This may be your best opportunity to attend such an event this close to home. To learn more, go to symposium@americantrails.org.



Mark Your Calendars:

- **March 20** Hickory Ridge (multi-use) Trail – water bar maintenance. Equestrians needed.
- **April 17** Beech Bottom (multi-use) Trail – water bar maintenance. Equestrians needed.
- **May 14-15** Working Weekend #56, upper Jacks River Trail – trimming, ford rehab, re-blazing. Equestrians needed (first 2 miles).
- **June 5** National Trails Day. Bear Creek Trail – water dip maintenance, blowdown removal & trimming.
- **July 17** Hickory Ridge (multi-use) Trail – trimming & slingblading. Equestrians needed.
- **August 13-14** Working Weekend #57, Hemptop & Penitentiary Branch (multi-use) Trails – slingblading & trimming. Car camping at the Jacks River Fields Campground. Equestrians needed.
- **September 18** Rough Ridge (multi-use) Trail – slingblading & water bar maintenance. Equestrians needed.



Note: In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to find some volunteers who are interested in working independently or with a small group to tackle smaller projects.

If you are interested, please contact Ed at 706-695-6736 x 118 or e-mail elang@fs.fed.us